

intensification in emphasis should be noted. The enhancement of rural services is an umbrella term for a direction of effort towards services to both children and adults in rural areas. This will involve the National Library working closely with other Government departments and local and educational authorities in a manner which will provide library supply, while strengthening local and regional initiatives and effort.

At this early stage, I consider the Strategic Management planning process to have been successful in allowing the enunciation of a clear statement of directions and priorities for the Library, in providing a short-term planning framework for our immediate operations, in encouraging discussion about the Library's aims, and in creating a greater degree of cohesion within the organisation.

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

Claudia Orange (Assistant Editor, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*) writes:

In the September 1984 issue of *New Zealand Libraries*, W. H. Oliver, the DNZB's editor, provided some background information on this Sesquicentennial project. Since then, as the Dictionary's network of voluntary assistants has increased its activity, a number of libraries throughout the country have been involved in research. Efforts have been directed to preparing the first nineteenth-century volumes. Nearly 5,000 forms have been distributed to Working Parties and consultants through which nominations and essential data can be supplied. The results are now appearing in the DNZB's Wellington office. Some 1,500 of the forms had been returned by the end of March. About 15 per cent provide information on women — a good representation, stimulated by a special appeal, but still short of a target of 20 per cent.

The information on these 1,500 Basic Information Sheets, as they are called, will now be entered on computer by the Dictionary's keyboard operator. Thus a database is being set up for better monitoring of the nomination process. Gradually this will evolve into a permanent biographical archive for research.

Over the next two years the selection of names for inclusion in the early volumes will continue. Although writing will commence shortly, a great deal of research work lies ahead. We will be very grateful for any help libraries can continue to give us — ideas, information, and perhaps publicity. We are still searching for interesting nineteenth-century women, for example. If libraries should want to appeal to the public, by mounting a display, we can supply a small kitset as the nucleus. Please write to Dr Claudia Orange, DNZB, Department of Internal Affairs, Private Bag, Wellington, for publicity material or further information.

Directions for Diversity: 2nd National Conference on Multiculturalism and Libraries, Melbourne, 15-19 February 1985

Margaret Gallacher (Senior Librarian, National Library of New Zealand) writes:

This second national conference organised by a sub-committee of the Working Group on Multicultural Library Services (Victoria) ran over five days and

featured local and overseas speakers who dealt with many aspects of multiculturalism relevant to librarians as practitioners, students and academics. Approximately 125 librarians from all parts of Australia, together with four New Zealanders and one Canadian, attended the conference held at St Mary's College, University of Melbourne.

An interesting dimension underlying the conference programme was that the definition of multiculturalism was still subject to debate and a concise and definitive meaning seemed not yet agreed upon. One sticking point concerns assertions that it must include the study of and involvement with aboriginal peoples. Such statements are not so much disputed as not understood, or not accorded importance or given priority.

The conference programme, however, provided insights into the current level of services and support for multicultural library services in Australia. Australian State and public libraries are engaged quite fully in providing library services for non-English speaking and reading groups. It was asserted repeatedly and substantiated by statistics of migration inflows to Australia that such services are necessary and important. One could conclude that in Australia the need for State and public libraries to provide multicultural library services seems self-evident. It was agreed that the continuing role of public libraries must be to provide information services of use and relevance to all groups in the community and that these services should support the use by ethnic groups of community languages other than English. The difficulties for librarians are concerned less with acquiring resources in languages other than English and more with the cataloguing and control of materials and promotion of services. There was a recommendation that now that services are being established the next stage should be to evaluate their use and effectiveness to ensure sound planning for the future.

The conference programme to some extent rested on reports of research in progress and research findings. One criticism would be that the value of some projects seemed doubtful because of poor definition and limited scope.

Keynote speakers, Sylva Simsova, Principal Lecturer, School of Librarianship, North London Polytechnic, and E. J. Josey, President, American Library Association, were highly commendable. Sylva Simsova's academic perspective and experience as a researcher in library services to migrants provided considerable depth to the conference programme and to discussions. Her understanding of, involvement with, and sensitivity to all the related issues of providing information to new settlers and minority ethnic groups were impressive. A fine orator, E. J. Josey directed the audience to consider racism and the effects of prejudice coupled with power, and more particularly, the role libraries must play to combat racism and to ensure information is available equally to all groups in society. The prospects can only be good if the profession includes increasing numbers of Black (in the New Zealand context, read Maori, Pacific Island, South-East Asian ...) librarians in its ranks and shows a real commitment to equitable services.

The conference heightened my awareness of multicultural library services in Australia. It also confirmed in me a belief that public libraries in New Zealand need to have quality collections of materials in languages other than English and to provide services of relevance to Maori and Pacific Island peoples and new settlers in their communities.

To achieve this a close involvement with these groups in the community needs to be established. At the same time there needs to be a wish to develop programmes that educate the majority culture. Access to resources and materials need not be an insurmountable problem.

The full conference proceedings will be published shortly and could provide an impetus to the development of multicultural library services in New Zealand.

Flood at Victoria

Kathleen Coleridge (Special Materials Librarian, Victoria University of Wellington) writes:

A combination of building operations and rain caused Victoria University Library to suffer a series of leaks in workrooms and library stacks, beginning at Christmas and culminating during a thunderstorm on the evening of Wellington's Anniversary Day holiday (21 January). About 1,500 volumes were affected to some degree, together with some microfilm, slides and videotapes, and the Catalogue Department had to evacuate its workroom.

Like Otago University, whose experience with water-damage was described by Rosemary Entwisle (*New Zealand Libraries*, v. 43, no. 12 (December 1982), pp. 200-201), Victoria has a Disaster Preparedness plan, and even staff with no training reacted in the right way on the Monday night. As we had nearly six weeks before the beginning of lectures in March we could use reading-room space for air-drying the books and did not need to resort to freezing and vacuum-drying. Once the rain stopped, humidity remained low and only a few isolated volumes developed mould, so that we did not need to use thymol treatment. Our greatest worry was, for a period, that the Catalogue Department workroom would not be dried out sufficiently for the staff to move back before students appeared in large numbers, but all was in fact returned in time.

Some points we noted may be of interest. Watertight waste-paper bins and polythene rubbish sacks can be used as buckets and waterproof sheeting in emergencies. Wet books may look an overwhelming disaster, but their treatment is much less urgent than photographic materials: a number of slides were lost because damage from the first minor leaks was overlooked, while the only books discarded were uncatalogued volumes replaced because that was cheaper than repair. Lists of suppliers of equipment or information are essential, but not all equipment will be available immediately it is wanted. Nearly three days of telephone negotiation were necessary before the Wellington firms offering fans for hire could supply three: we could have used seven. One thing we would do differently, should we have a repeat experience, is to spell out to all affected staff how long the clearing-up process was likely to take. Not all staff grasped how long the disruption would continue and their anxieties were apparent as the third, and then the fourth, week passed.

User charges in academic libraries

Concerned at the lack of realistic guidance for academic librarians in Britain on the question of charging for library services, the Section Committee of the University, College and Research Section of the Library Association in February 1983 established a Working Party to examine user charges. The Working Party, convened by Richard Biddiscombe of the University of Birmingham, was asked to

consider the principles and practice of charging for access, borrowing and services by academic libraries, taking into account the growth of extension education and the consequences for future policy on national resources.

The report of the Working Party which was first presented to the Committee in October 1983 has since been revised and issued as *UC + R Discussion Paper*, no. 1, under the title *Charging for Services in Academic Libraries* (Nottingham: University, College and Research Section, Library Association, 1984; 8 pp.; ISBN 0-947696-00-8).

Although many British academic libraries have for some time been empowered to levy charges on readers who are not members of the parent institution, these charges were often not imposed in the relatively affluent years which followed the expansion of universities in the 1950s and the increased development of the tertiary education system following the Robbins Report of 1963. In recent years, however, Government policy has been to reduce expenditure on higher education, with the result that academic library budgets have been cut at a time when user expectations have been rising, especially in relation to new information services. Given that the new services require extra funding which the library itself cannot provide, charging the user may be seen to offer an equitable solution to a difficult problem.

The report notes four current developments of concern to academic librarians with regard to staffing and the provision of equipment: the introduction of new technology, the development of closer links between academic institutions and industry, the new emphasis on lifelong education, and the recognition of the role of academic libraries within the wider national information network. It also observes that many libraries are apparently unclear as to the purpose of levying charges and argues strongly that a well defined rationale for charging should be established before charges are introduced. In this respect the Working Party endorses the practice of using the principle of level of service to provide a rationale for library charges, a principle enunciated by the Canadian Working Group on Charging for Library Services in their report *To Charge or Not to Charge: A Guide for Federal Libraries* (Ottawa: Council of Federal Libraries, 1981). In particular, the Canadian report notes that

This overall rationale for charging based on level of service provided allows an acceptance of the concept of user fees for extra services beyond the basic access, while still ensuring that the ideal of freedom of access to information is realized to the greatest extent possible. (p.7)

Following a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of charging and a simple analysis of categories of users, resources and services in relation to charges, the report concludes that the imposition of charges is the only likely way in which new developments will be financed and offers six recommendations concerning their introduction and administration.

Copies of the report, and also the second number in the *Discussion Paper* series (*Open Learning: Implications for Academic Libraries*), are available at £3.50 each from Mrs Penny Craven, Pilkington Library, Loughborough University of Technology, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU, England.